30 April 2021

Mr. Andy Simon, Chairman
Blount County Public Library Board of Trustees
Blount County Public Library
508 N. Cusick Street
Maryville, TN 37804

Re: Resignation

Dear Mr. Simon,

Please accept my resignation as director of the Blount County Public Library effective 28 May 2021. My very first priority is always the library and its standing in the community. It is my belief that tendering my resignation at this time is in the best interest of the library. I have steered the library through some very difficult times over the past seven years and have invested a great deal of time and effort into expanding the library's service capacity across Blount County in support of building a sustainable community.

Under my leadership, library programs and services have expanded exponentially with cutting edge programs like the *Recovery Court Life Skills Program*, the *Southern Appalachian Studies Program* which includes the writer in residence program and Foothills Voices, the *1Read Program*, Mini Con, and the *Cormac McCarthy Literary Festival* as examples. I oversaw the purchase and renovation of the Learning Lab, the LED lighting conversion both inside and outside the library facility, the HVAC software and system operations upgrade, the digital signage system, and the ongoing technology upgrades to meet the changing community needs with respect to technology.

I have overseen three major staff restructuring efforts during my tenure as director in response to changing community needs and external events. One of my primary goals as director was to have professional library staff recognized and paid for their education and experience. I am very proud of the fact that this was accomplished during the Evergreen Study through my perseverance in working with the county on job classifications for these staff members. Additionally, I fought hard to ensure that staff also received their longevity pay at great personal sacrifice. I was also successful in creating additional full time positions within the library structure including the deputy director position, the library IT specialist position, and two additional facilities team positions.

Managing the library during the pandemic has been extremely difficult, yet I made sure that this essential community service facility was open and serving the community by 6 July 2020. I implemented strict cleaning structures, a master schedule that kept staff working together safely, ensured all staff kept their jobs, and were paid on their regular schedule. I accomplished these tasks by being flexible and by responding quickly when the library closed its doors for almost four months. The decisions that I made during this time have been very difficult often resulting in situations of extreme stress for both myself and the library staff. I initially hoped I would not need to reduce staffing levels, but library revenues fell short and staff layoffs became necessary.

It is my hope that the library will recover quickly from the restrictions placed on it by the pandemic and move forward to continue on to become a true cornerstone of the Blount County community and continue to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

I am excited about pursuing other career options and appreciate having the opportunity to lead this wonderful library. I have attached a complete list of accomplishments during my time as director to provide the library board with context for the growth of the library during the past seven years, and to provide a roadmap for the next director to use moving forward.

I wish the library board of trustees and library staff all the best as you work together to provide library services to Blount County.

Kindest regards,

K.C. Williams

Kaurri C. Williams-Cockfield
Director, Blount County Public Library
2 January 2014 through 28 May 2021

Notable Accomplishments

When I assumed the directorship of Blount County Public Library in January of 2014, the library board tasked me with advancing all facets of library service. To that end, the library board held a board workshop on 18 January 2014 to discuss capacity expansion actions. At this workshop, the board outlined the focus areas for building capacity across library service areas. These goals included the following:

- Build community relationships to expand the reach of library services
- Develop a technology plan to improve and update library technology systems
- Develop processes to improve communications with local governments
- Support board member development
- Improve statistics collection and recording
- Gather staff input on library strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- Improve teamwork across library departments
- Update library organizational chart, job descriptions and develop a staff pay scale
- Implement a streamlined scheduling process for staff
- Provide opportunities for staff development

The actions shown below were planned, developed, and or supported by me in my role as the director of the library. These actions were then implemented, under my leadership, through incredible support from the library staff, friends of the library and the library foundation. Please note that this list was pulled directly from the board of trustees minutes and the library director's reports and that these actions were approved by the library board. This list represents the strides this library has taken under my tenure and illuminates how far the library has come in the past seven years. This list does not include a comprehensive listing of all the exemplary programming created and provided by library staff under my direction. Instead, I have included a statistical snapshot of library funding, staffing levels, and library use over this same time frame

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in an effort to provide context to the outcomes of these actions. The data contained in this snapshot was taken from the data collection report filed annually with the State of Tennessee.

FY 2013-14 (January - June 2014)
- Met with each staff member to complete individual SWOT analyses
- Enrolled the library in the Erate reimbursement program
- Secured funding and oversaw the repairing of the main level library building interior
- Secured funding, organized and traveled with library management staff as they attended their first Public Library Association Meeting
- Secured salary increases for maintenance staff and part time staff
- Sent library cards and thank you notes to all local elected officials, the Blount Partnership and the chamber board of directors
- Created a statistical data gathering tool in Excel for in depth data collection and reporting
- Purchased the first point of sale software system to manage and inventory sales in the library and library cafe in accordance with county finance directives
- Approved and facilitated the library's participation in the *Geek the Library* national library promotion campaign
- Filed for and received an LSTA grant to upgrade library technology
- Created a technology plan for the library to update both public and staff technology and improve library network infrastructure
- Developed the curriculum and training materials for a two week (80 hours) staff development program, *BCPL Professional Development Academy,* which focused on technology skills and library service skills
- Taught the BCPL Professional Development Academy to the first library staff group
- Began the migration from library management software platform VERSO to Book Systems software platform ATRIUUM

FY 2014-15
- Taught the BCPL Professional Development Academy to the second and third staff groups
- Held the first library administration team planning retreat (28, 29 September)
- Implemented a monthly half-day library managers training
- Had library staff certified as public notaries
- Developed the first set of strategic directions for the library
- Became a grant partner with UT School of Information Sciences on their IMLS grant titled *A Toolkit for Librarians to Assist Small Businesses*
- Developed a partnership with the Blount Chamber to offer *Growth Wheel* - a 20 week management course for the public in the library
- Developed a partnership with the Adult Education Foundation to offer the GAINS workforce development program, which was funded by the local ALCOA foundation (ARCONIC) for unemployed and underemployed
- Served as the library skills instructor for the GAINS program

- Worked with staff and management team to created new job descriptions for all library employees in preparation for review through the countywide Evergreen study to develop a county pay schedule
- Created a web coordinator position to oversee library website development and maintenance
- Applied for and received a Jane Pettway Grant to develop collaborative learning spaces in the Adult Services area
- Spearheaded, and secured funding for, the purchase of the vacant Tennessee Bank building adjacent to the library
- Oversaw the implementation of the Amber Point of Sale software system to manage library retail sales
- Developed and implemented the first library collections inventory since 2002
- Directed the planning and rearrangement of library spaces to improve public access and management of the adult services public computing areas and the technical services area
- Directed the implementation of the first "Ready to Read" program for pre-k (Growing Ready Readers)
- Developed a partnership with the Blount County Clerk's office to relocate their drive up window to the Learning Lab (renovated Tennessee Bank building)
- Developed and implemented the 2015-16 Business Plan to expand library capacity and increase library generated revenues. This plan included the installation of a new phone system and a building wide digital media system
- Developed and implemented a hotspot circulation program to provide low cost high speed Internet access to patrons
- Submitted and received an LSTA grant to purchase laptop computers for staff
- Partnered with the Blount County Veterans Department to facilitate the implementation of the Michael A. Ferschke Jr. statue on the library property adjacent to the pedestrian bridge
- Developed and implemented a new staff organizational structure and clarified the role of each library department with respect to the provision of library services to the community
- Developed and presented the use plan for the Learning Lab as a discovery, learning and creation space for app development, robotics, web development, coding and fabrication

FY 2015-16
- Established an ongoing partnership with the Blount County Recovery Court to provide life skills training to recovery court participants and to provide access library spaces for group meetings
  - Created the initial twelve month curriculum and provided life skills instruction to recovery court participants twice a week
  - Program expanded to four meeting a week in 2018 with four library staff members providing instruction
  - Curriculum and facilitation guides posted online on *Populr.me* web platform

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- Developed and implemented a program proposal process for use by library staff to coordinate the use of Blount County Friends of the Library funding to library program outcomes
- Developed the annual friends funding request proposal structure and tracking spreadsheet
- Developed and implemented a partnership between the library, the Blount Chamber of Commerce, and the Blount County Adult Education Foundation to create a soft skills program titled *It's Your Career...* This program was funded by the chamber with library staff and a contract instructor overseeing curriculum development, instruction and the creation of online learning modules through the online web publishing platform *Populr.me*. These modules are accessible for schools and other organizations to use at no cost
- Filed for and received erate funding for fiscal year
- Filed for and received LSTA funding to upgrade library technology
- Requested and received $250,000 from the library foundation to complete the renovations to the learning lab
- Partnered with the Blount Chamber to apply for a TN Reconnect Grant
- Created the Appalachian Studies Program focusing on the development of programs and services focused on preserving East Tennessee culture
- Developed and oversaw implementation of the Appalachian Studies writing project titled "Foothills Voices" resulting in the publication of *Foothills Voices* Volume I
- Spearheaded and coordinated the installation of an ATM machine in the library in partnership with Alcoa TN Federal Credit Union
- Under the direction of the library board, oversaw the renovation of the Learning Lab (Tennessee Bank building) with the majority of the work being completed by the inhouse library facilities team

FY 2016-17
- Created a partnership with the Blount County Election Commission to establish the library as an early voting center
- Filed for and received an LSTA grant to upgrade library technology
- Worked with the Blount County IT department and Avero, Inc. on the countywide network overhaul
- Led a two-day library administration planning retreat focusing on leadership, management and the setting of library goals to address strategic priorities
- Oversaw implementation of the *Step Up Program*, a workforce development program funded by the Arconic foundation, in partnership with the Adult Education Foundation of Blount County
- Established a non-profit co-working space in the library for the Adult Education Foundation of Blount County
- Facilitated the implementation of the *Read to Be Ready* third grade reading remediation grant program (an eight week summer program) administered by the Blount County School District and held in the Learning Lab

- Created and oversaw publication of the first formal strategic directions report, *Building Community 2014-2017 In Review*, for the library
- Created and funding a new position, deputy library director, and established a finance and public relations department
- Created an instructional librarian position to oversee programs offered in the Learning Lab
- Developed the strategic directions plan directing library services from January 2017 through December 2019 with a focus on library spaces, the Blount County learning community, documenting the culture of Blount County, and the fostering of collaborative relationships across the community
- Represented the library at the 2017 Tennessee Library Association Conference with a presentation on the Blount County Recovery Court Life Skills Program
- BCPL assumed the role of primary partner, with support from the Blount County Friends Group, ensuring continuation of the Arconic International Foundation Manufacturing Internship
- Expanded cafe services to include coffee service and catering for meetings held in the library
- Filed for and received funding for Category 2 services in the amount of $17,000 to purchase network infrastructure equipment
- Facilitated the hosting of the second *Read to be Ready* grant program in partnership with Blount County School District
- Published a chapter on the use of unstructured research methods to gather community input on library services featuring the Blount County Public Library in *Progressive Community Action: Critical Theory and Social Justice in Library and Information Science*

FY 2017-18
- Filed for and received and LSTA grant to upgrade library technology
- Created a position for a library PC Specialist to oversee the library network and to coordinate with the Blount County IT Department
- Coordinated the renovation of the library's IT Room into formal office space for the PC Specialist and the Web Coordinator
- Enabled a switch to LAVU point of sale software for library retail sales to allow for PayPal integration
- Facilitated the implementation of staff training to meet requirements set by the Tennessee State Library and Archives
- Served as a development board member for the Sky City Initiative to support entrepreneurship in Blount County
- Purchased a subscription to *ContentDM* software and established the Blount County Virtual Archive to provide access to archival collections held by Blount County Public Library
- Facilitated the second *Foothills Voices* cohort resulting in the publication of *Foothills Voices* Volume II

- Created the Writer-In-Residence program (Jim Stovall served as the first writer in residence)
- Facilitated, secured funding for and implemented the first survey to gather public input on library services
- Coordinated and funded the upgrade of commercial cafe equipment including a new refrigerated display case and refrigerator
- Coordinated and funded the renovation and repainting of three of the library's public meeting spaces
- Expanded online services to support workforce development through the purchase of an annual subscription to *Lynda.com*
- Developed and implemented a new staffing structure to improve operational efficiency, meet expanding community needs, and expand operational capacity in food services; two new positions created (Kitchen Coordinator, Catering Coordinator)
- Coordinated and managed the 21 August 2017 total eclipse viewing which was attended by over 4,000 people
- Secured a catering contract with the Maryville Rotary Club for their weekly meetings at the library
- Filed and received an LSTA grant to upgrade library technology in the amount of $26,020
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FY 2018-19
- Secured funding and provided oversight, in coordination with C2RL, Inc., for the purchasing and installation of a new HVAC chiller and a new controls software system for HVAC management
- Secured funding and provided oversight of the purchasing and conversion of an LED lighting system both inside and outside the library facility to lower utility costs
- Planned and provided oversight for the library's centennial celebration events and activities held throughout 2019. Activities included a new library logo contest, a library materials donation campaign, a *Libraries Through the Century* display, an *About the Library* video, a centennial webpage, the *Cormac McCarthy Literary Festival*, the *My Library Is...*social media campaign, the *BCPL Moment in History* social media campaign, *Beyond the Shelves* podcast, a BCPL history digital timeline on the library's website, a historical recipes project in the cafe, a baby book basket for the first baby born on the library's birthday, and a variety of centennial swag
- Secured funding for and purchased $40,000 in new seating for the library's reading rotunda
- Participated in a six month evaluation and planning for the main library capital project in coordination with C2RL, Inc and the library board of trustees
- Planned and implemented a luncheon meeting between county commissioners, city council, city commissioners and the library board to gather input on library services
- Enabled and oversaw the development and publication of a bi-monthly printed newsletter on library programs and services as an insert to the Daily Times newspaper

- Facilitated the implementation an equipment inventory process for technology; technology was tagged and entered into the library management software
- Reorganized the facilities team, established bi-weekly meetings, developed a facilities management plan and tracking system
- Coordinated facilities management systems with county systems (fire alarm system, badge entry system, etc)
- Facilitated the creation of a new teen space
- Facilitated the development and implementation of a comprehensive public relations restructure that included specified outputs and timelines
- Facilitated the application for the American Dreamers Grant (ALA) to support an existing ESL program held in the Alcoa School District; Two grants were received in the amount of $11,000 and $10,000 respectively
- Received $65,000 in additional funding from Arconic International Foundation to continue the manufacturing internship program
- Facilitated the application for $19,995 to fund technology instruction from the Tennessee State Library and Archives; Project was funded
- Facilitated and oversaw the development of a library mobile app
- Coordinated the planning and development of the 1Read Program, a community read for middle school grades focused on celebrating diversity in partnership with the Blount County School District and the Blount County Friends of the Library; This was a semester long program integrated across the middle school curriculum around *Refugee* by Alan Gratz
- Reframed library art representative of East Tennessee and specifically Blount County Culture, rehung the refurbished art and facilitated museum type labeling for each image
- Facilitated the selection and purchase of a Japanese materials collection funded by DENSO
- Facilitated the expansion of the Southern Appalachian Studies program to include a book club, a quilting club, and a seed library
- Participated in the development and implementation of the *Off the Map* project to create a historical walking tour of Blount County through the *CLIO* App
- Developed a five year capital plan for library maintenance and expansion
- Secured funding and coordinated the installation for an updated video camera surveillance system with the Blount County IT Department
- Facilitated an application for the ALA Thinking Money Exhibit which will come to Blount County Public Library in August of 2021
- Contracted with EpicNine to teach an eight week *WordPress* workshop
- Expanded the patron library policy to include teacher cards, military cards, two-year full service library card renewals and four year ecard renewals.

FY 2019-20
- Led the staff in the development of a library values statement
- Contracted with Amy Campbell to paint a centennial portrait of all the library directors
- A formal interlocal agreement for funding the library signed by the three funding bodies

- Presenter at the Public Library Association Conference on the Blount County Recovery Court program and the library's participation as a case study library in the OCLC study on the impact of the opioid crisis on public libraries
- Developed and coordinated the installation of new rock gardens at the front entrance of the library in partnership with the friends group and the United Way Serve Week activities for intermediate students from Coulter Grove and Montgomery Ridge Intermediate schools
- Facilitated and secured funding for heirloom apple trees and the Cormac McCarthy plaque located adjacent to the Cormac McCarthy mosaic on the front lawn
- Partnered with the Blount County Health Department to host a free flu shot clinic in November 2019
- Facilitated the expansion of non-profit coworking spaces in the library
    - Be Aware Blount
    - A Place to Stay
- Moved lawn care services to the library facilities team and purchased equipment necessary for facilities to maintain the library's green spaces
- Developed the strategic directions plan for 2020-2022
- Facilitated a library collection weeding plan which was completed during the pandemic
- Implemented a patron cards review plan and process, deleted expired library cards older than June 2016
- Implemented a patron account review plan using county GIS to correct address locations in the library management software
- Developed and implemented a plan for library closure and work-from-home procedures and assignments for library staff in response to the COVID 19 pandemic
- Reallocated monies to expand digital resource offerings (Zoom rooms and Hoopla)
- Facilitated staff created "how-to" screencasts which were distributed via social media and posted to the library's YouTube channel
- Facilitated the moving of library programs to digital formats
- Developed and maintained a daily library use statistical tool to keep the library board informed of library staff work from home outputs and community use of library resources during the library's closure
- Developed and implemented a comprehensive closing and reopening plan (library reopened to the public on 6 July 2020 to ensure continual provision of library services that included:
    - Implementation of curbside service
    - The installation of air scrubbers (GPS Air Filtration System) to remove the virus from circulation in the library
    - Extreme cleaning protocols
    - Glass partitions on all service desks
    - A master schedule to ensure that staff could work and still maintain social distancing
    - A staff mask mandate
    - A staff temperature check

- ○ A public temperature check
- ○ A work-from-home protocol for at risk library staff
- ○ Strict meeting room use procedures and attendance limits
- ○ Installation of commercial video and sound equipment in library meeting spaces to effectively support hybrid online meetings

FY 2020-21
- Coordinated the installation of the new digital security camera system
- Coordinated early voting in the library facility using the COVID 19 protocols developed to keep library visitors safe
- Developed and presented a plan to install a large public pavilion on the library's front lawn
- Began coordinating with Chris Soro, C2RL, Inc., on the library roof replacement to take place in FY 21-22
- Held Zoom staff meetings (in groups of four) to discuss the sustainability plan and its' impact on library staff and library services
- Developed and began implementation of the sustainability plan to continue providing library services with a $200,000 loss of library generated revenues due to the pandemic; The efficiency plan included the following actions:
  - ○ The layoff nine part time staff
  - ○ The elimination of library middle management with respect to HR management
  - ○ The division of library services into three areas: Administrative, Financial, and Educational Services
  - ○ The creation of an HR manager (Cynthia Spitler)
  - ○ The ongoing use of a master schedule for all staff
  - ○ Cross training of staff across all five service desks
  - ○ Transition of remaining part time staff to full time to create three distinct shifts for ease of scheduling and to improve staff engagement
- Developed the SkyFi Program to purchase and install 24/7 wireless Internet access/solar powered picnic tables outside the library and around the community
  - ○ Facilitated the grant application to Arconic Foundation to fund the first two tables which have been installed outside the library
  - ○ Program partners include the friends of the library, the Maryville Rotary Club and the Alcoa Kiwanis Club
    - ■ Maryville Rotary Club has raised the funds to purchase two table to be installed in Alcoa; these tables have been ordered and will arrive in June
    - ■ The Alcoa Kiwanis Club is currently writing a grant to fund two tables at the Martin Luther King Center
    - ■ Joe Huff, BC Parks and Recreation, is supporting this program by installing the concrete pad sites for the table installations
    - ■ Blount County Government is funding the infrastructure for the wireless access for these tables
- Secured funding, purchased and coordinated the installation of two new boilers

- Coordinated with Chris Soro, C2RL, Inc., on a proposal to determine cost estimates for installing a public bathroom in the lower level, enclosing the current gaming space to create an additional meeting room, and to soundproof the library work spaces with no ceilings
- Purchased a subscription to Kanopy streaming service to expand digital offers to the community
- Coordinated the purchase and planting of three additional apple trees around the Cormac McCarthy mosaic with a goal of providing a community orchard.
  - These trees were planted in honor of two retirees and in memory of James Gentry.
  - One additional tree has been planted in memory of Karen Petry (sponsored by her church). (Karen took care of the library plants for many years)
- Published a chapter discussing the 1Read Program in *A Librarian's Guide to Engaging Families in Learning,* Libraries Unlimited (Anticipated release date late in Summer 2021)
- Published a chapter discussing the Blount County Recovery Court Life Skills Program in *Social Justice Design and Implementation in Library and Information Science* (Anticipated publication date in Fall 2022)

Statistical Snapshot

Fiscal Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	*2019-20	*2020-21
Materials Circulation	708,823	761,155	826,846	861,223	713,809	756,062	574,380	467,025
Library Visitors	388,918	357,747	339,511	390,092	374,499	377,990	251,472	167,148
Technology Use (# of Uses - all resources)	387,095	467,569	421,842	458,115	495,986	743,965	592,427	746,343
WiFi Use (Sessions)	54,032	50,040	64,982	136,695	169,463	168,927	120,806	74,852
Physical Collection Size (# Items)	194,692	229,129	229,636	234,328	243,711	247,706	240,371	*240,371
Adult Programs	257	284	409	435	1,419	4,184	2,085	2,991

Adult Program Attendance	13,473	11,326	19,273	21,055	20,628	22,920	18,726	13,705
YA Programs	76	89	117	149	215	257	177	84
YA Program Attendance	1,403	1,765	1,815	1,751	2,175	6,993	3,338	758
Juvenile Programs	230	197	230	305	334	867	627	93
Juvenile Program Attendance	18,056	7,823	10,301	11,112	12,408	11,041	7,320	4,371
Total FTEs MLS Librarians	5.3	7.05	7.45	8.18	10.45	11.18	11.18	11.95
Total FTEs Number of Staff	38.95	38.68	41.54	43.03	42.45	38.7	42.35	36.08